

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA  
ATLANTA DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v.

UGOCHUKWU LAZARUS  
ONEBUNNE,

Defendant.

CRIMINAL ACTION FILE

NO. 1:18-cr-92-TCB

**ORDER**

This case comes before the Court on Magistrate Judge Linda T. Walker's final report and recommendation (the "R&R") [191], which recommends dismissing Onebunne's § 2255 motion [189] as impermissibly successive and denying Onebunne a certificate of appealability. No objections have been filed.

A district judge has a duty to conduct a "careful and complete" review of a magistrate judge's R&R. *Williams v. Wainwright*, 681 F.2d 732, 732 (11th Cir. 1982) (per curiam) (quoting *Nettles v. Wainwright*, 677 F.2d 404, 408 (5th Cir. Unit B 1982)). This review may take

different forms, however, depending on whether there are objections to the R&R. The district judge must “make a de novo determination of those portions of the [R&R] to which objection is made.” 28 U.S.C.

§ 636(b)(1)(C). In contrast, those portions of the R&R to which no objection is made need only be reviewed for “clear error.” *Macort v. Prem, Inc.*, 208 F. App’x 781, 784 (11th Cir. 2006) (per curiam) (quoting *Diamond v. Colonial Life & Accident Ins.*, 416 F.3d 310, 315 (4th Cir. 2005)).<sup>1</sup>

After conducting a complete and careful review of the R&R, the district judge “may accept, reject, or modify” the magistrate judge’s findings and recommendations. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(C); *Williams*, 681 F.2d at 732. The district judge “may also receive further evidence or

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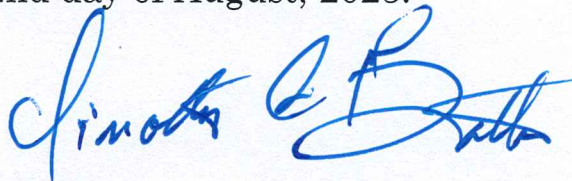
<sup>1</sup> *Macort* dealt only with the standard of review to be applied to a magistrate judge’s factual findings, but the Supreme Court has indicated that there is no reason for the district court to apply a different standard to a magistrate judge’s legal conclusions. *Thomas v. Arn*, 474 U.S. 140, 150 (1985). Thus, district courts in this circuit have routinely reviewed both legal and factual conclusions for clear error. See *Tauber v. Barnhart*, 438 F. Supp. 2d 1366, 1373–74 (N.D. Ga. 2006) (collecting cases). This is to be contrasted with the standard of review on appeal, which distinguishes between the two. See *Monroe v. Thigpen*, 932 F.2d 1437, 1440 (11th Cir. 1991) (holding that when a magistrate judge’s findings of fact are adopted by the district court without objection, they are reviewed on appeal under a “plain error standard” while questions of law always remain subject to de novo review).



recommit the matter to the magistrate judge with instructions.” 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(C).

The Court has conducted a careful and complete review of the R&R and finds no clear error in its factual or legal conclusions. Accordingly, the Court adopts as its Order the R&R [191]. Onebunne’s § 2255 motion [189] is dismissed as impermissibly successive and a certificate of appealability is denied. The Clerk is directed to close the parallel civil case (No. 1:22-cv-3426-TCB-LTW).

IT IS SO ORDERED this 22nd day of August, 2023.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Timothy C. Batten, Sr.", is written over a horizontal line.

Timothy C. Batten, Sr.  
Chief United States District Judge